Wheat and Rice at half the PDS Prices

124. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH : Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken a decision to provide wheat and rice at half the PDS prices to 65 million families in the country; if so, the details of the decision taken;

(b) whether there are FPS (Fair Price Shops) in all the villages in the country, if not, the number of villages in the country, Statewise which do not have FPS till date; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take to ensure that benefit of the scheme reaches such villagers?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir. The Government has approved the Scheme of Targeted PDS, which aims at providing Wheat and Rice at about half the PDS prices to about 3203.68 lakh persons, i.e. 35.97% of the total population in the country. The details of the scheme are as follows:

(i) All families living below poverty line shall be provided with 10 kg. of foodgrains per month per family at about half the C.I.P.

(ii) Identification of population below poverty line shall be taken up by State Governments on the basis of provisional estimates of below poverty line population worked out by the planning Commission for 1993-94 adopting the methodology of the Expert Group under Chairmanship of Late Prof. Lakdawala.

(iii) The issue of foodgrains for non-poor shall, however, continue on the basis of average annual lifting of foodgrains by the States for the last 10 years at normal Central Issue Price (CIP).

(iv) The State Governments will have to ensure fool-proof identification of poor, delivery of foodgrains to fair price shops for distribution to the poor in a transparent and accurate manner.

(v) Specially subsidised foodgrains will be issued also to all beneficiaries under the Employment Assurance Scheme/Jawahar Rozgar Yojana at the rate of 1 kg. per man day.

(b) and (c) The operational responsibility of PDS at Fair Price Shops (FPS) level vests entirely with the State Governments/UT Administrations. As such the Central Government does not maintain village-wise information/data about Fair Price Shops. The Central Government, however, provides financial assistance to State Govts./UT Admns. for purchase of mobile vans/trucks which serve to ensure doorstep delivery of PDS commodities in remote and inaccessible areas/villages not covered by Fair Price Shops.

Postponment of the Launch of RPDS

125. DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have postponed the launching of the Revamped Public Distribution System from January 26, 1997 to June, 1997; and

(b) if so, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (b) Government have approved the scheme on streamlining the Public Distribution System with focus on the poor. State Governments/UT Administrations have been asked to make necessary arrangements for identification of poor, delivery of foodgrains to fair price shops

and distribution of foodgrains to the poor in a transparent and accurate manner. Actual issue of foodgrains at especially subsidised price for the Below Poverty Line (BPL) population will be made as and when a State has identified the BPL population and made satisfactory arrangements for issue of foodgrains to them.

Abnormal rise in Prices of items of Daily Need

126. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Varshik samiksha: Sarkar ne gehoon, chana or aaloo ke daam badne ki baat maani" which appeared in the Dainik Jagran dated 25th December, 1996;

(b) if so, the facts thereof; and

(c) the reasons for the Government to have not been able to control the abnormal rise in prices of items of daily need?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (b) The news item in the 'Dainik Jagaran' on 25.12.1996 was based on the Press Note issued by the Government on 24.12.1996. The Press Note gives details regarding the av..ilability and prices of wheat and other essential commodities alongwith steps taken by Government to control the prices.

(c) The Government has taken a number of steps to control the prices of essential commodities. In order to meet the shortage of wheat, action has been taken to import wheat up to 2 million tonnes through STC. Apart from certain long term measures to increase the production of essential commodities, imports of commodities which are in short supply are encouraged to augment the availability of these items. Some, of the commodities are also supplied through the Public Distribution System and Cooperative Stores on below market prices. Stringent actions are being taken against hoarders and blackmarketeers and others indulging in unfair trade practices under the Essential Commodities Act and Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintanance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act etc. by the State/UT Governments.

Allotment of Palmolein Oil to Punjab

127. SHRI MOHINDAR SINGH KALYAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the total quantum of Palmolein Oil allotted to the State of Punjab during the last two years;

(b) whether Government propose to increase the quantum of Palmolein during the year 1997-98; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) No damand for supply of imported palmolein for the PDS has been received from the State of Punjab during the last two years.

(b) and (c) The Government of Punjab has indicated nil requirement of palmolein for 1997-98.